764 left of each chamber's entrance and was left to go out by itself. The body was placed in the middle of the chamber, the feet to the north and the head to the south. At the time of a new burial, all the long bones were gathered in one corner of the chamber and all the skulls in another, for the number of deceased was verified by these. Finally in the Kokum region hundreds of tumuli cover vaults consisting of a [346] heart-shaped chamber cut in the laterite and preceded by a vestibule to the west and by steps cut into the rock which lead to the open air. The outside and inside doors are closed by a slab of laterite. The outside door is hidden under the tumulus, with three equally-spaced stones marking the location. The skulls are arranged in a dome and separated from the long bones. Lastly, the tomb of the village's founding ancestor is found in the center of the village, to the north of the old fortified court of the chiefs' house.

III. Art

• 517 The Bambara conception of art is very different from the occidental idea of art for art's sake. Every object that we find beautiful has a precise social, religious, or technical significance for the Bambara: "The art of the Blacks is purposeful ... it is gratuitous projection in a material of ideas and knowledge which bring the user or spectator nothing other than themselves. Doubtless crude in the first stages, often the product of superficial knowledge or even of calculated errors, the esthetic sense of the Blacks is clarified and affirmed as they learn and as they pass from a 'light knowledge' to a knowledge of the great secrets. It seems impossible to an educated man that he could make an abstraction of his knowledge to judge a dance or to become enthusiastic over the playing of a clever harpist. What we call beauty is for the Black the adequacy of the object to represent that for which it is created." (1)

1. M. Griaule, "L'art nègre" [Negro Art], Présence africaine.

532 The masks conceal the person and transform the human being [769] into a supernatural being. They are the privileged instrument of the nyama, the first [104] model having been carved to fix the vital force of the first dead ancestor in a wooden figure. "The society of

545 Example:
794 Tiekoroba kolili (the old man who has nothing)
522 Ita rokina momindi (what you say is not liked)
Ida konieti aie (you are right)
N'ka idia dopina marmandi (but one doesn't like what you say)
Or again:
Demise fentili (the rich young man)
Ida dokma kakadi (one likes what you say)
Ida konie tinaie (what you say is not true)
N'ka idia dokma makadi (but one likes what you say)

545 The Kworéduga have the su (Moor) as taboo, and they accom-
534 pany themselves in singing with a sacred gourd, yaraba, which con-
794 tains seeds of Lufa cilindrica.

536 Finally, during the circumcision initiation period for example,
881 the child learns the sacred dances which often mime exploits of the mythical ancestors.

177 A certain evolution characterizes the native art which has
●517 been transformed in a curious fashion by contact with Europeans. In European centers, prolonged contact with the Whites has confused the beliefs that inspired the art, but the artists have lost neither their taste nor their gifts. At the request of the Whites themselves, they have undertaken a controlled art, with the aim of pleasing the Europeans. Needless to say, even if it conserves some charm in its form, all this new art, which evolves with the same swift rhythm as our modes, remains terribly dead, for the true source of inspiration has dried up. This art no longer seeks to be true, but to be pretty; by this it signs its own death warrant.

[109] CONCLUSION

I. Traditional Interpretation of Mental Characteristics

181 In the introduction to Religion Bambara, Tauxier insists on the mental characteristics: "The Bambara has remained rather openly fetishist"; he possesses "two dominant traits, which are absolutely undisputed and indisputable:

"1. He is a very good farmer.